

REMARKS

Applicants have amended their claims in order to facilitate proceedings in connection with the above-identified application, so as to achieve earliest possible issuance of a U.S. patent based thereon. Specifically, the Examiner is thanked for the indicated allowance of claims 2, 3, 20, 21, 33 and 35. It is noted that claim 2 as allowed was a dependent claim, dependent on claim 27; accordingly, by the present amendments, the subject matter of claim 27 has been incorporated into claim 2, so that claim 2 now constitutes an allowable independent claim. Moreover, dependencies of claims 20 and 21 have been amended, such that each of these claims is dependent on claim 2. Furthermore, claims 1, 4-19, 22-32 and 34 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Initially, it is respectfully requested that the present amendments be entered, notwithstanding Finality of the Office Action mailed August 25, 2006. Clearly, cancelling of claims 1, 4-19, 22-32 and 34 is proper, noting 37 CFR 1.116(b)(1). In addition, noting that the Examiner has indicated allowable subject matter of claim 2 for the first time in the Office Action mailed August 25, 2006, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments are clearly timely; and it is also respectfully submitted that the present amendments present all remaining claims in condition for allowance, and do not raise any new issues, including any issue of new matter.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants have made the necessary showing under 37 CFR 1.116; and that, accordingly, entry of the present amendments is clearly proper.

In view of the present amendments, it is respectfully submitted that the prior art rejections set forth in Items 3-5 on pages 2-6 of the Office Action mailed August 25, 2006, are moot; and, while Applicants do not agree with these rejections, or


contentions made by the Examiner in connection therewith, no further discussion is made herein in connection with the prior art rejections, for purposes of conciseness.

In view of the foregoing comments and amendments, entry of the present amendments, and reconsideration and allowance of all claims remaining in the above-identified application, are respectfully requested.

Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper to the Deposit Account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (case No. 1204.41259X00), and please credit any excess fees to such account.

Respectfully submitted,

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